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ABSTRACT

This report describes how expanding Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) services in New York City's Community School District 11 (CSD 11) demonstrates how a community school district can work with early childhood programs in the community to integrate early childhood services and public education in the northeast Bronx. The report examines the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and discusses the philosophy and strategy put into place to create the collaborative leadership structure. Information was obtained from interviews with the director of early childhood of CSD 11 and staff members, surveys and meetings with directors of community-based organizations (CBOs), advisory board members and parents, reports from kindergarten teachers, and Early Childhood Strategic Group participation on the advisory board. The report highlights the role of the Director of Early Childhood for implementing and managing UPK, and the CSD 11 business model recognizing the leadership role of CBOs. Discussion of the program model focuses on the management plan, building participation in UPK, recruitment and enrollment, program standards and assessment, and professional development. The report concludes by pointing out that if community school districts desire a working relationship with CBOs, they need a clear vision of a collaborative model, mutual respect for the professional commitment of CBOs and schools, a well-functioning CSD management system, an active advisory board, investment in the program and technical support, a strong working relationship with CBO directors, a business model recognizing finance and program needs, attention to parent needs, attention to professional development, and consistent review of how the model is working. The report's three appendices include copies of surveys for parents, directors, and advisory board members. (KB)

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The Universal PreKindergarten Program In Community School District Eleven, New York City

A Study in Collaborative Leadership and Systems Building

By Charles Paprocki and Nancy Kolben

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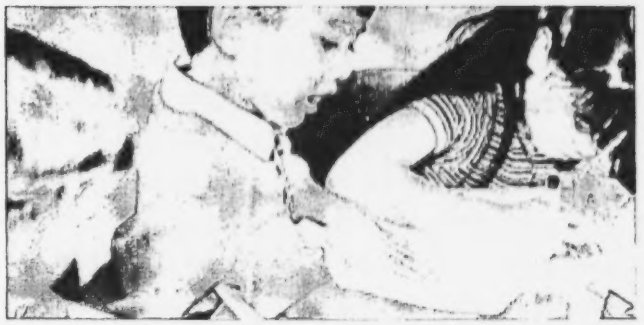

The Early Childhood Strategic Group

This report was prepared by the Early Childhood Strategic Group Resource Center in collaboration with Community School District 11. The ECSG is a partnership of organizations and individuals who are dedicated to creating a comprehensive and fully integrated early care and education system in New York City. The Resource Center offers resources and information to the field. The ECSG also works with the Emergency Coalition to Save Universal PreKindergarten, the statewide Center for Early Care and Education, and The Alliance for Quality Education to create a strong early care and education system.

Since Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) legislation was passed in the summer of 1997, the ECSG has worked to support full implementation of this program to ensure that all children have access to essential early learning opportunities. We have produced reports on many aspects of the implementation process, including blended funding policy, cost allocation, workforce availability, community-based organization (CBO) / Community School District (CSD) relations, the Advisory Board process, and parents' response to UPK.

The implementation of the UPK program in New York City has leveraged unprecedented collaboration between city agencies, early education advocates and program providers. An ongoing dialogue between the Board of Education, the Human Resources Administration, the Administration for Children's Services / Agency for Child Development, ACS / Head Start, the Department of Health, early education advocates and program providers has successfully begun the process toward a more integrated early care and education delivery system.

A study by the ECSG in 2001 looked at how community-based organizations viewed their relationship with community school district offices. We were pleased to find that over 80% of CBOs characterized their working relationship as a positive one.

This report on Community School District 11's UPK program was developed in response to many requests from community-based early education providers, Community School District personnel and city agency personnel for information on a successful collaboration model at the Community School District level. It takes the next step in analyzing the mechanics of a positive working relationship between a Community School District and its CBO partners.

A special thank you to Community School District 11 and the Universal PreK programs, as well as the teachers, parents and Advisory Board members who contributed to this project.

"The partnership between CSD 11 and community-based early care and education programs to provide Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) has been exceptional. The CBOs have been strongly committed to making UPK a success. We have shared information and resources freely which has served to enrich the quality of our UPK programs. For its part, the District has played an invaluable role in creating a collaborative leadership structure, enhancing curricula and in introducing an open, equitable and transparent budgeting process." Joyce James, Executive Director, Susan Wagner Day Schools

"The District maintained a straight forward posture of fair treatment for all nonprofit early childhood centers, regardless of size or operating budget. This value on educational equity is a true community-building approach which the District provided." Charles Rosen, Executive Director Gloria Wise Boys and Girls Club, Goose Bay Nursery

"Please permit me to tell you how pleased we are to be a part of the District 11 Universal Prekindergarten program. The District has been extremely supportive in assisting us in maintaining both the integrity and the culture of our preschool program while being a partner with the Board of Education." Dr Valerie A. Daly, CEO, Parkchester Early Learning Center on the Oval

"We probably would not have opened a UPK program if we had not been invited into the collaboration by District 11. We are delighted to be part of an initiative that models the good things that can happen when the public sector and the not-for-profit or for-profit sector can work together for the sake of children." Sister Ursula McGovern, Director, Saint Dominic's Home

"District 11 visits our program on a regular basis and always offers helpful and insightful suggestions. They are always willing and able to assist us with our annual budget and listen to suggestions and concerns we may have." Francis Bloome Caines, Director, Maggie Alston Day Care, Inc.

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Introduction

The expansion of Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) services in Community School District 11 demonstrates how a Community School District (CSD), working with early childhood programs in the community, has integrated early childhood services and public education in the northeast Bronx. The goals are to increase full-day options for working parents, enhance quality in programs, promote professional development across the system and create smooth transitions for young children from preschool to public schools. The district continues to make significant progress toward these goals.

This report looks at the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and discusses the philosophy and strategy put in place to create their collaborative leadership structure. It tells us what the parents thought about the program and how the children progressed. The information from this report came from interviews with the Director of Early Childhood of CSD 11 and staff members, surveys and meetings with directors of community-based organizations (CBOs), Advisory Board members and parents, reports from kindergarten teachers, and ECSG participation on the CSD 11 UPK Advisory Board.

Background

In 1997 New York State enacted a major, education reform legislative package mandating reduced class size in grades K-3, full-day Kindergarten and Universal PreKindergarten through the public education system. This legislation made New York State a leader in the country in recognizing the link between early education and successful school reform. New York State Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) (Chapter 436 of the Education Laws) in 1997 calls for access to preschool for all four-year-olds, regardless of income or special needs (language barriers or disabilities).

The legislation requires collaboration between public schools and community-based early childhood programs as a strategy for maximizing resources and ensuring quality in all settings. It stipulates that at least 10% of each school district's UPK funding must go to eligible community-based early childhood agencies such as Head Start, child care, special education programs and others. This requirement provided the impetus for much of the collaboration work that is described in this report.

Each of the 32 Community School Districts in New York City was required by the New York City Board of Education to convene a Universal PreKindergarten Advisory Board composed of a full range of local stakeholders to develop a plan the first year of implementation.

The Board of Education gave substantial responsibility for implementing the UPK program to the district offices. Each CSD establishes its own UPK Advisory Board. It negotiates and contracts with eligible early education providers within its district. In the first year, 40% of seats across the city were contracted to community-based organizations (CBOs). Since then the percentage has grown, so that now nearly 70% of UPK seats are in CBOs.

New York City has nearly 2,000 early childhood programs licensed by the Department of Health that provide the majority of early learning programs. To be considered an eligible UPK provider, a program must be licensed or exempt, have been in operation for two years and offer a learner-centered and educationally designed program to meet the social, cognitive, emotional, cultural and physical needs of children. In New York City, the strong regulatory standards require certified teachers and a comprehensive program.

The Board of Education estimates that there are 110,000 four-year-olds in New York City. As the chart below demonstrates, less than half of them were enrolled in some type of program prior to passage of UPK.

PROGRAM	NUMBER OF ENROLLED 4-YEAR OLDS CITYWIDE
Board of Education	12,000
Head Start	12,000
ACD Contracted Child Care Centers	15,000
Private Preschool Programs	8,000
Preschools In Nonpublic Schools	5,000
SED Approved Special Education Preschools	4,000

The Universal PreK program brought together, for the first time in the city's history, the various sectors of child care and early education to collaboratively plan and implement an early education program. Head Start, child care centers, special education programs, and private nursery schools all became partners with the Board of Education to offer UPK. UPK indelibly linked child care and early education conceptually. In doing so, it has served as an important foundation for creating a comprehensive and well-integrated early care and education system.

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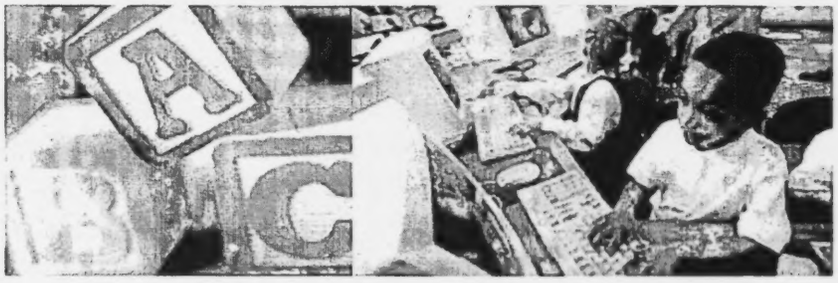

About Community School District 11

Geographically, Community School District 11 covers a large area of the northeast Bronx. It serves Baychester, City Island, Co-Op City, Parkchester, Pelham Parkway, Morris Park, Wakefield, Williamsbridge, and Woodlawn. The population of the area is ethnically diverse, including working and middle class residents. The families come from 123 countries and speak 53 languages. There are approximately 2,500 four-year-olds in the district. Of these, the UPK program serves 1,800. This is approximately the same number of children served in the entire city of Buffalo or Yonkers and is a larger number of students than that served in any other city in the state.

When UPK legislation passed in 1997, Community School District 11 had no available classroom space in its 23 elementary schools in which to offer UPK. Therefore, it depended exclusively on Community-Based Organizations to provide these services. The district currently offers UPK services in thirty-eight early childhood sites throughout the district.

CSD 11 provides a model for building effective partnerships. It benefited from strong, visionary leadership within the school district as well as vital leadership from early education programs in the community. This supported a new dialogue between the emerging partners in which each learned from the other.

The Community School District Superintendent

The leadership from the Superintendent, Marlene Filewich, was critical to the success of the program. The UPK program was closely linked to the District's mission and was seen as an integral part of the District. The mission of the District is:

> "*to enable all children to acquire the finest possible education so that they may achieve to the highest academic standards. This extensive learning will occur regardless of socioeconomic conditions, native language and/or special academic or emotional needs, all in a safe and nurturing educational environment. In order to accomplish this, the District's primary responsibility is to organize instruction; train its staff; involve all constituents, especially parents; provide resources and assess instructional progress to maximize learning in all of its schools.*
>
> *Our philosophy is to encourage and facilitate school-based decision making as vital to school and student success. Within this context, the District supports each school's commitment to becoming a School of Excellence and Opportunity.*"

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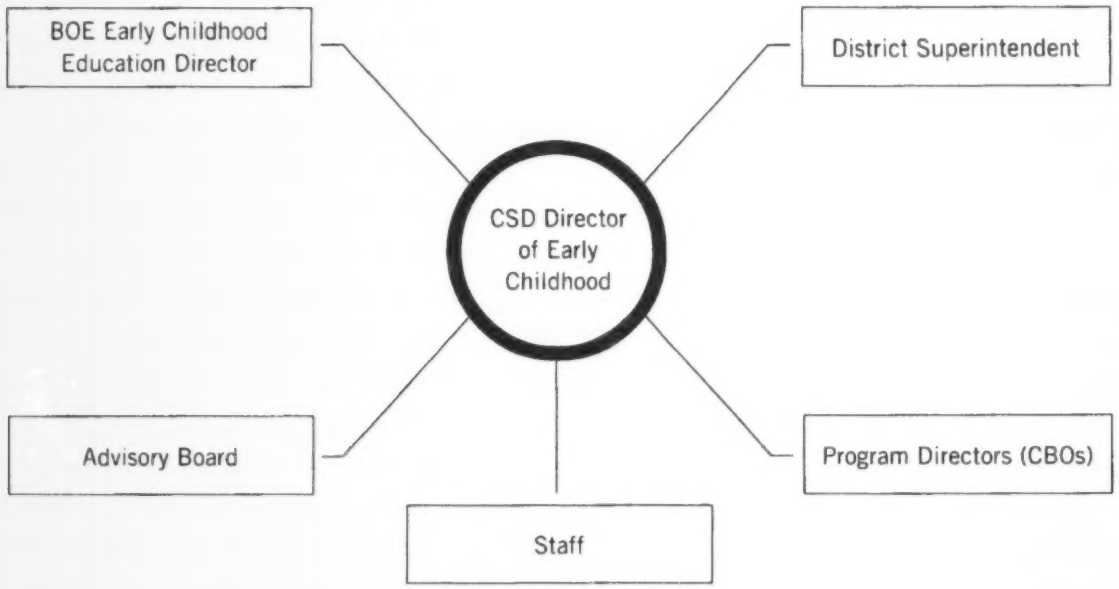
The Superintendent provided the Early Education Director with the necessary tools and staff to create a collaborative leadership structure. The Superintendent met with the UPK Advisory Board and attended CBO meetings to assure them of the District's full support.

The District actively pursued multiple partnerships. This included a relationship with Mercy College to enhance educational opportunities for new teachers and those working in the field. Another partnership with Einstein Hospital was developed to provide health services. The District also actively supported a unique art workshop program with Retech Inc. for the UPK sites. In recognition of the District's leadership in building strong collaborations, the CBO community presented the superintendent with awards on two separate occasions.

The Community School Districts' Early Education Directors/Coordinators have primary responsibility for the implementation of the UPK program. With no public schools in which to offer UPK in CSD 11, Dorothy Cusack, the Director of Early Childhood, embraced "*the goal of the district to enrich, encourage and help to implement quality UPK programs in the community.*" As such the district set about to "*create a directors' network of individual agencies, as adult learners and as a community of professionals, to share experiences, celebrate achievements and problem solve together.*"

A Model for Management of UPK



The Director of Early Childhood's responsibilities regarding UPK are to:

- Maintain ongoing communication with the Superintendent;
- Oversee all stakeholder activity, including coordinating the UPK Advisory Board;
- Administer contracting process;
- Review program budgets;
- Recruit children;
- Manage personnel;
- Create affiliations with higher education and health services;
- Provide professional development to program directors and teachers; and
- Maintain relationship with the Board of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education.

This is a complex role that calls for a careful selection of program providers, careful budget reviews, contract negotiations, monitoring etc. and requires a close working relationship with the District's legal staff and business manager. At the same time, it calls for knowledge of the educational components of the program and sensitivity to child care, Head Start and Preschool Special Education.

Working With Partners

Creating the Vision

In Community School District 11, the Director of Early Childhood (DEC) approached program implementation as a "business." *"I used the same logic one would use in creating a business enterprise in which resources are invested to produce profitable outcomes. In this case, the resources were the early education providers and other people in the community and the profitable outcomes were our children's learning readiness and their social and emotional success in the world."*

To accomplish these outcomes, the DEC proposed a collaborative leadership strategy that encouraged mutual education between the district and the CBOs, as well as mutual administrative responsibility and accountability. She shared this vision with her administrators, Advisory Board members, program directors, and staff.

The following driving forces shaped the collaborative leadership vision in CSD 11:

- A Community School District committed to expanding early education opportunities.
- The funding sources for UPK.
- A public awareness in the district of the importance of early education.
- A strong base of early childhood programs in the community willing to participate in a new partnership.
- A recognized need for full-day programs to meet the need of working parents.
- The need for a common strategy for a well trained and well compensated workforce in all settings.
- A large, diverse student base with many early education programs in the community responsive to the ethnic and cultural diversity.

Central Board of Education

In her efforts to implement the UPK program, the DEC received active support and mentoring from Eleanor Greig-Ukoli, the Director of the Office of Early Childhood Education at the BOE who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of UPK in all 32 Community School Districts and the Chancellor's District. The DEC discussed with the Director all challenges to existing Community School District regulations and modes of operation and received assistance in setting new policies to accommodate a partnership that extended beyond the Board of Education. Through a free exchange of ideas and feedback, the DEC participated in policy development regarding budgets and contracts. She also worked closely with the Legal and Contracting Offices at the Board of Education.

The UPK Advisory Board – A Continuing Role

UPK legislation called for each Community School District to set up an Advisory Board composed of community stakeholders. The Advisory Board's role, as defined by legislation, was to develop an implementation plan to be approved by the district superintendent. While the legislation was silent regarding an ongoing role for Advisory Boards, the Board of Education encouraged their continuation.

CSD 11 recognized the Advisory Board as a valuable community resource. In the district's game plan, it was the primary vehicle that allowed mutual planning by all stakeholders for the creation of an early care and education system.

The Advisory Board included members from the Community School District office, the teachers' union, community-based organizations, parents, city agencies, early education providers, university personnel and others. While each stakeholder struggled to ensure that his or her issue gained attention at the initial meetings, the group soon learned to work together in harmony. This was facilitated by the collaborative leadership skills of the DEC. Her first order of business was to share the mission of the district and the value of creating a strong early education foundation. She told the Board that all decisions would be transparent and that they had a leadership role in decision-making. They would also have the responsibility for realizing their decisions by taking action and getting the job done.

All areas of the program were discussed openly and new ideas were welcomed. The goal was to make decisions by consensus. If decisions were unable to be reached in this manner, the CSD made a decision based on the legislation, the district needs or the majority view. These decisions were always up for additional review if the Advisory Board members indicated a need to do so. This seemed to be a fair process to everyone. The district made few decisions in this manner and none were ever challenged subsequently.

The Board was task oriented. Once goals were set and decisions made, people were held accountable for outcomes. Board members visited potential sites and were involved in the decision making process regarding the selection of providers.

This process built involvement and trust among Board members. It allowed each constituency to ensure that the program evolve with their needs and concerns being addressed and resulted in all constituents taking responsibility for the success of the program and in sharing the belief that they were all acting for "our children."

Moving Ahead

After the second year of implementation, most of the early care and education programs within the district were involved in the UPK program. The Advisory Board was unclear about its continuing role. The ECSG was invited to offer technical support. Working with the Advisory Board members, the ECSG helped to redefine goals and objectives within a larger mission. This mission extended beyond the implementation of UPK to the design of a comprehensive, well-integrated early care and education system at the local level. The Board agreed to undertake the following tasks:

- Develop a survey to better gauge parents' acceptance of the program and whether it meets their needs. A survey was developed that became a template for a citywide initiative. (See Section on Parent Response below.)

- Adjust future planning to the needs of parents as expressed in the survey.
- Develop a report on the implementation process of UPK in CSD 11 to document what members felt was a unique and powerful collaborative effort.
- Play a greater role in systems building at the local and city levels, engaging in advocacy and collaborations to forward an integrated early care and education system.

The Advisory Board Survey

In 2001, a survey was distributed to all participating Advisory Board members to learn why they participated on the Board, their visions and how they saw their contributions to the Board. (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.) All but three of the 31 board members responded. The responses to the survey verify the value of the participatory model developed by School District 11. We learned that they were initially motivated to serve on the Board to ensure the stakeholders they represented were at the table, to network with other professionals and to ensure that all children in the district received UPK. After three years of service, Board members now serve on the Board to preserve the continuum of programs, ensure quality of programs and address workforce needs. They also want to continue the process of systems building. Every member feels that they are making a difference and that his or her contribution to the Board was recognized and appreciated. Some Board members reported that being a member from the very beginning has given them a sense of ownership and has allowed them to see the results of their participation in this successful program serving preschool students. It has provided the opportunity to network with colleagues outside the Board of Education and share common interest and concerns.

The continued commitment to the work of the Board was expressed by several of its members. One member reported, *"I hope to continue to work to maintain the gains made in the past three years, start to focus on such issues as quality of service, certification, training, retention and resources, explore diversity and program design such as full day, extended day, limited transportation and health issues."* Another indicated, *"The program has grown beyond my expectations and I am hopeful this early year of education will help youngsters to be successful in meeting the new state standards."*

Board members said they continue to appreciate Board meetings for the exchange of constructive ideas, for their task orientation and for the mix of personalities and enthusiasm shared. They all feel that the experience of serving on the Board enhanced their life and their work. When asked if they would recommend the UPK program to their own family members, they all heartily endorsed it. They recognized the value of educational and technical support provided by District 11.

The Early Care and Education Community

The success of the UPK program required the participation of a wide range of early education programs, all of whom were required to meet regulatory requirements and many of whom were required to meet requirements of more than one city agency. Head Start programs, for example, contract with the Administration for Children's Services Head Start program, while child care is administered by the ACS/Agency for Child Development. Special education programs have separate funding and very specific program guidelines with substantial involvement from the State Department of Education and the city's Board of Education. The BOE also ran another preschool program that had to be coordinated with Universal PreK. Each of these early education programs came with its own procedures and regulations regarding financing, length of day and calendar year, the age of the children covered, fees, staff qualifications, ratios and group sizes, personnel practices, health, facility, food and safety. Many child care providers might contract

with several agencies and work to blend funding from each to provide full-day, year-round programs for children.

Prior to the implementation of UPK, many of the city agencies had limited opportunities to work together. Within the schools and the Community School District office, personnel generally had no knowledge of the early education field outside the public school walls. Bringing people together across delivery systems who had little relationship with each other presented many challenges. These included:

- developing a base of common knowledge among the parties;
- developing trust;
- assessing funding requirements and programs;
- creating strategies for program assessment and monitoring;
- setting up a communication system that linked parents, CBOs and Community School District administrative staff.

The District 11 Business Model

The district contracts for UPK services. How money is spent comes with guidelines. The district reviews the proposed budgets and is responsible for guiding and reviewing the budgets for UPK services of all the community-based organizations.

We wanted to allow maximum utilization of resources and fair play within the entire system of early care. I think we developed a business model that is based on our philosophy of collaborative leadership in which we build community with the families and directors of agencies through the UPK program.
– Dorothy Cusack, CSD 11, DEC

The business model in CSD 11 recognizes the leadership role of community-based organizations. Their Executive Directors are viewed as equal partners in a cooperative approach to planning and implementing the program. From the beginning, the Community School District staff and members of the Advisory Boards visited CBO sites to learn about their programs and encourage their participation. As the programs developed, the following supports were put in place:

- All CBO directors are invited to attend monthly meetings in which they share information on planning, implementation, program improvement, and how to overcome individual and collective problems.
- A funding plan was developed that equalizes the per-pupil rate across all programs. The goal is to give program directors maximum flexibility in framing their program and budgets. The district believes that this strategy serves them better than the standard approach of funding each program based on individual contract negotiations.
- The DEC and her staff consult on a regular basis with each provider. They encourage the appropriate use of funds and suggest ways to maximize the use of money to improve their programs.
- The Community School District shares information about suppliers of educational materials and consultants and assists CBOs with cost allocation issues.
- The district offers professional development opportunities to the directors and provides information to share with their teaching staffs.
- The DEC makes herself available to CBO directors by being responsive to calls, making visits to sites, and ensuring that her staff responds to CBO needs and the needs of parents.

- Each CBO is encouraged to maintain its unique program culture in offering UPK and to cooperate with the CBO community as a whole.
- Accountability is demanded at all levels through clear job descriptions and clear expectations.

These strategies ensure that the emphasis remains on the curriculum and program with budget and administrative issues serving program needs.

The Director of Early Childhood fostered collaborative leadership as a key element in the business model for UPK. *"I think it is important to start out knowing that we are adult learners and there needs to be a spirit of empowerment among the directors to take these UPK guidelines and the vision of the district, and with your own strengths build quality into your programs based on your knowledge of parent needs and the culture of the community."*

One of the primary goals continues to be to maintain the culture and diversity of the CBO partners as reflections of the diversity in the community.

The following sections take a deeper look at some key elements of the business model.

Allocation of the UPK grant

District 11 has determined a rate per child that it pays to service providers with whom it contracts. The district adopted this model because it believes it would optimize the use of resources while fostering cooperation and minimizing competition. It would lead, therefore, to a stronger sense of community. The district reports that it works with community-based providers as working partners in ensuring that children and families were optimally served, rather than as *suppliers* or *vendors* who must negotiate a dollar amount per child in competition with other suppliers.

The District first assesses its own costs for administering the UPK program. It sets aside a portion of UPK funds that it receives from the city and state to cover staff costs, including the Preschool Specialist, five part-time Liaison Secretaries and auditors. Funds for Professional Development are also set aside. The District's in-kind contribution is its Director of Early Childhood, attendance outreach staff and business staff.

The funding received in excess of these costs is then divided among participating programs at a flat, per-child rate based on the total number of children to be served in the district. The rate per child is publicly announced. In other districts, the DEC negotiates individually with each program.

While each program in CSD 11 receives the same dollar amount per child, the district allocates its dollars to the best advantage given each program's financial needs. To ensure that the dollars are properly utilized, the district hires outside auditors to review UPK expenditures.

According to the CBOs, this transparent model eases anxiety over budget and contracting issues and provides a sense of stability for their programs.

The DEC indicated that in her experience this model of funding allocation strengthens the partnership. She benefits by a relationship in which she can speak freely on how to make best use of the money for program enhancement and make recommendations on how to upgrade the facility, materials, equipment and consultants without being perceived as an outsider attempting

to control a CBO program. The program providers, in turn, can access support in the review of their programs and brainstorm their improvement.

The single rate also allowed the DEC to strengthen agencies, working with them to move from acceptable to excellent. The DEC framed a role with the CBO that is focused on educational excellence and recommended improvements that she saw needed to be made while at the same time validating program accomplishments. In this way, the DEC was able to increase the number and quality of early education programs in the district and build consensus on a standard of excellence.

While there is unanimous support in Community School District 11 for the unified rate, it is unknown whether this approach would work in other districts. There may be an economy of scale at play because Community School District 11 has a large UPK budget due to the number of children it serves. Further research needs to be done to see if this funding approach could serve as a best practice model for other districts.

Consultation

The Community School District staff utilizes a consultative model to help early education programs plan their budgets within the funds available. The district also makes extensive use of peer mentoring, referring CBOs to other program directors having similar issues and providing monthly meetings to share views on issues.

Audits

In order to ensure compliance with education law and Board of Education regulations regarding allowable costs, the Community School District hired Watson Rice, an outside auditor, to review site budgets and ensure that money was spent appropriately and within the agreed upon budget proposals. This action provided financial documentation for the Community School District and also helped the CBO community keep proper accounts and plan their budgets consistent with program development.

Individual Meetings with Directors of Early Education Programs

Three times a year the DEC or the UPK Specialist meets with a Director to review vision, program, budget variance and perform a site-evaluation. There is a Mid-Year Program and Budget Review and Evaluation and a Final Program and Budget Review and Evaluation. At these meetings plans are also made regarding the anticipated year's contract and the use of educational consultants.

Findings from a Survey of CBOs in Community School District 11

To determine how the collaboration worked from the perspective of the CBOs, the ECSG surveyed the 27 participating agencies in the summer of 2001. (See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.) Eighteen programs responded to our survey. All chose to participate in the UPK program because they saw it as a quality program that would benefit children and families. Pre-school special education programs recognized UPK as a new opportunity to integrate their programs and serve typically developing children as well as those with special needs. Others indicated that the partnership with CSD 11 allowed them to refine their educational techniques, improve their teaching methods and serve a greater population.

CBOs identified a number of benefits from the program. First were new educational resources. Respondents identified UPK as providing additional professional development, classroom

supplies and equipment. Participants noted that the periodic evaluations created a push for excellence. Respondents reported that the participation in monthly directors meetings offered new insights on curriculum and professional development. Some reported that participating in UPK helps to ensure stable funding for the program and allows children whose parents could not afford fees to participate.

The program directors conveyed a strong belief in their early education philosophy. While the majority of providers said they did not believe that the partnership changed their philosophy, many commented that it enhanced or strengthened it and were grateful for this. The great majority did say, however, that the collaboration had improved their vision of an integrated early care and education system. They felt that they were participating in something greater than their own program.

Directors also felt that their own professionalism was enhanced by being able to keep current on developments in the field and by being challenged to create excellence.

The great majority of CBOs graded the professional development offered by the district as good to excellent. They especially commented on the expanded resources, fresh ideas, access to vendors and the respect afforded to their teachers. One provider wanted the district to send a needs assessment to the CBOs regarding training so that they would have a greater say in choosing topics of discussion.

There was a common theme among CBOs that it was very difficult to hire qualified staff due to a shortage of teachers and that the demands of UPK for more teachers increased this pressure. When asked what kept their teachers in the classroom, the majority said it was the love of children. Other things mentioned were an attractive salary, small class size, good materials and staff training.

The partnership with the district created new opportunities for the CBOs, including the ability to serve more children, the ability to have inclusion classrooms, more trips, events and workshops, greater visibility in the community and networking with other professionals through monthly meetings.

When asked if there was anything about their partnership they would like to change the great majority said no. One director responded that she wanted more guidance filling out the paperwork. Another wanted more collaboration on a one-to-one basis.

All but one of the directors had a positive response to a standard district-wide rate per child for UPK services. Several noted, however, that the rates needed to be increased to cover the rising program costs, particularly for qualified staff. All talked about the need for effective planning and budgeting and the importance of understanding payment levels for UPK services in order to make these projections.

There was overwhelming support for the equal rate per child payment system across programs.

Every CBO said they actively reached out to families to participate in the UPK program. Finally, a majority of CBOs felt that the collaboration enhances their image in the community because they are officially linked to the public education system. The collaboration also increased their ability to educate parents as to the value of a good early care and education program.

The Program Model

To create positive relations with the early education providers, the Director of Early Childhood promoted a shared understanding of the UPK program goals and objectives. This was achieved in the following ways.

- Site visits by the Director of Early Childhood and staff;
- Site visits by members of the Advisory Board;
- Monthly meetings with CBO Directors; and
- Joint professional development training with public school and CBO staff.

Each of these events was used to build a common vision and a commitment to quality early education. The expanded definition of their role as equal partners in systems building encouraged the CBOs to work to their fullest capacity in an environment of mutual trust and enthusiasm.

The many neighborhoods in Community School District 11 have given rise to a variety of early education programs that mirror their different cultures. To validate this rich cultural inheritance, the Community School District encouraged the early education programs to maintain their unique programs and projects. The DEC therefore promoted different curricula while concentrating on the development of the cognitive, sensory-motor, and social-emotional skills that are the "learning skills" required for school performance.

The CSD Management Plan

Internal Coordination

The DEC, PreK Specialist and the Liaison Secretaries meet monthly to ensure knowledge of District Pupil and Personnel Law and Procedures and for monitoring purposes. This allows for maximum consideration among the staff at the CSD who interact with CBOs and parents.

The PreK Specialist in Community School District 11 visits all the sites and works out the day-to-day issues that the Directors face. She organizes the monthly meetings of the early education providers and the meetings of the UPK Advisory Board.

The Community School District also hired five "Liaison Secretaries" to work with the 38 UPK sites. These are new staff positions in the district office. Each secretary is assigned to a specific number of sites so that she gets to know the programs. The secretaries help the directors and their staffs handle the paperwork that is required. They assist in developing the ATS system, solve

attendance issues, discharges etc. Providers feel confident that their queries are answered promptly and professionally. This cuts the time directors have to spend dealing with paperwork and allows them to concentrate on program enhancement. Secretaries are given their sites based upon an equal distribution of students.

Building Participation in UPK

The District worked systematically to encourage all types of early care and education programs to participate in UPK. All CBOs in the district were mailed a request for proposal (RFP) and were approached personally by district personnel and members of the UPK Advisory Board and encouraged to participate in the program. The Advisory Board also played a role in selecting the participating agencies. A wide range of programs now paricipate in UPK, including a school for the blind.

Program Support

The District's staff is available to discuss the proposal process and even work with the CBOs to articulate their proposed early education program and its costs. The PreK Specialist visits each program and works with the director and teachers to ensure a quality program. The District also collaborates with New York University to support Directors of the CBOs in creating excellent early care environments.

Special Services to Smaller Agencies

Smaller agencies that lack the resources of the larger agencies receive extra consultation, if they request it, on upgrading their facility, equipment, teacher salaries, fringes, bookkeeping, as well as curriculum support and ways to improve developmentally-appropriate practices.

Outreach to Providers of Special Education

Fiscally, the DEC or UPK Specialist works with the CBO program director to understand the budget implications of blending UPK funds with special education dollars.

CSD 11 has the highest rate of 4410 school participation in the city. In fact, all 4410 providers in the district now offer UPK. Twelve of thirty-six sites offer programs to children with special needs. These programs have been a great resource for UPK children because the special education programs are able to provide many more resources than are typically provided in a general setting.

Initially there was a perceived hesitancy on the part of parents with typically functioning children to put their children in classes with children having disabilities. To address this, the Community School District worked with the 4410 schools to create community-building events within the centers that informed parents of typically functioning children about resources in these programs. Exchanges between parents of disabled children and parents of typically functioning children were encouraged. Children were encouraged to understand and help each other.

The district staff also visited the classrooms to ensure that the children in inclusive classes received the educational resources they were entitled to. This was monitored to build bridges between the typically performing children and the children with special needs and their respective parents.

Today, inclusion classrooms are well accepted by all parents and children in the district. All 4410 providers in the district offer UPK.

Recruitment and Enrollment

Help in Recruitment

The CSD participates in the process of recruiting children for the program, including ads, flyers in the public schools and outreach to community organizations.

Clear Enrollment Process for Children

In the first year of operation, parents went to the CSD office to pick up their applications. The CSD Director of Early Childhood met the parents and the parents learned about the Community School District. The parents were then referred to sites in their neighborhood. They were told when the CBOs would hold an "Open House" and parents would attend these events with their children so that the child could see where they would go to school.

In the second year and each year following, the CBOs were given complete responsibility / freedom to enroll their own children. All registration is now done at the site. This has been a benefit to all parties. Parents are immediately able to set up a relationship with the program director in their neighborhood. They visit the program and enroll their children at the site they want their child to attend. All the paperwork is done there. The CBO director ensures that children have gotten their physical exams etc.

This makes it easy for parents. For the center's part, they do not have to wait for the school district to send them children. CBOs outside CSD 11 have complained that this often results in an undercount at the last minute and a reduction in the contract amount. Additionally, enrolling the children at their site builds visibility in the neighborhood for the centers and establishes their presence as educational establishments. It creates stability for the center and for the community.

To help in their recruitment effort, each CBO is encouraged by the District to create promotional materials that the district pays for in its UPK budget. This material describes the program and the vision of the center.

Program Standards and Assessment

Program Standards

In order to promote quality without sacrificing the diversity of the programs in the community, the Community School District promoted a set of learning skills that it wants the children to achieve, based upon age-appropriate behavior. The skills to be developed in the children are indicated in the district's Child Development Profile. How they are developed is up to the CBO.

Peer Review

The Advisory Board has begun a peer review process in which small teams of Advisory Board members, CSD staff and CBO staff visit sites to learn from and offer suggestions for improvement. In this way, consensus on quality and how to achieve it is being shared and expanded.

Assessment of Children

Each program uses a Standard Developmental Profile, provided by the District, to review children's progress in developing their cognitive, sensory-motor and social emotional skills. The district is working to do a longitudinal study of the children.

Assessment of Site

The CSD uses a version of the NAEYC accreditation readiness survey to help CBOs assess their program needs.

Monthly Meetings with Directors

The Director of Early Childhood and the UPK Specialist meet monthly with the CBO directors. At these three-hour meetings one hour is dedicated to research that addresses the philosophy of early learning, language development, child development issues etc. The second hour is dedicated to business matters. The final hour is dedicated to classroom management. Vendors are invited to attend the meetings to introduce directors to child development products.

Transition Strategy

School District 11's strategy for transitioning children from community-based centers to public schools is based on the concept of having a "seamless classroom and a seamless curriculum." The district wants to create an alignment between environments and programs. A subsequent goal is to integrate the Speaking and Listening Standards and the Prekindergarten Performance Standards into the programs.

All CBOs that offer UPK are assigned to an elementary school. They are encouraged to call the principal of the school and set up an appointment. During the appointment they discuss curriculum and visit the school's kindergarten classes to see what the expectations are for the children.

The principal shows the CBO Directors a sample of ECLAS scores of entering children as well as assessments made by kindergarten teachers and K-2 reading evaluations. As the CBO Directors begin to see the structure of the kindergarten programs they begin to design their own curricula to set the stage so the children can meet the kindergarten expectations when they leave preschool.

Principals are now in the process of visiting CBO sites to learn about their programs.

The school district also gave each public school a set of children's books on the topic of transitioning for kindergarten teachers to help the children adjust to being in a large school.

The principals are discussing having a parent orientation meeting in June to introduce new children to UPK. The parents will find out about the program and be referred to a CBO in their neighborhood. All paperwork with the parent will be done by the CBO.

Professional Development

Teacher Training

The District decided to focus on professional development for Directors rather than teachers because they see the directors as responsible for their own programs and their own staff. In turn, the directors share lessons and materials learned at their monthly meetings with their teachers.

Link With Mercy College Early Education Degree Program

In Community School District 11, as well as in districts throughout the city, there is a great need for certified teachers. CSD 11 had recruited Mercy College, which offers a degree program in Early Education, to sit on the Advisory Board. The college has recently gained approval from the State Education Department to offer a revised degree program that meets the new course requirements for the new teacher certification. The program allows UPK teachers to earn a BS or MS degree. CBO sites in CSD 11 will be used for field-based supervision. There will be individualized faculty advisement to help teachers overcome hurdles from admissions, credit transfer, program planning and state certification. Courses may be taken without matriculation.

Parent Response

Meeting Parent Needs

The Community School District initially determined the parents' need for the UPK program by sending out a questionnaire through the public school system. The response from parents allowed the district to identify parent needs and contract for services in areas of highest need.

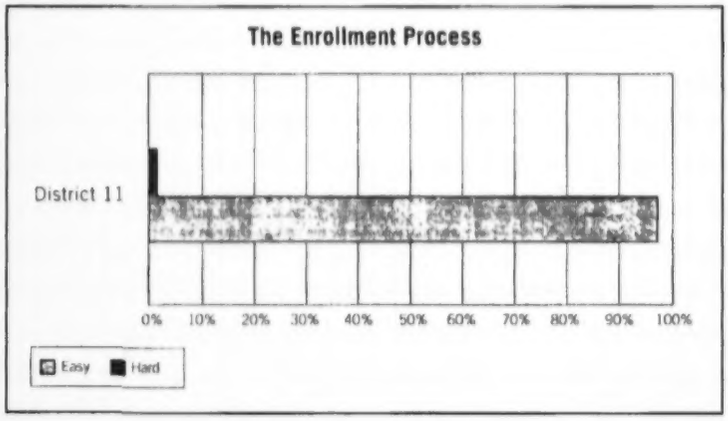
A second survey was distributed at the end of the 2000-2001 school year to determine if the UPK program was meeting the needs of parents. Over 460 parents responded.

The response of the parents to the UPK program in Community School District 11 was overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-seven percent of those surveyed said they would recommend the program to other families.

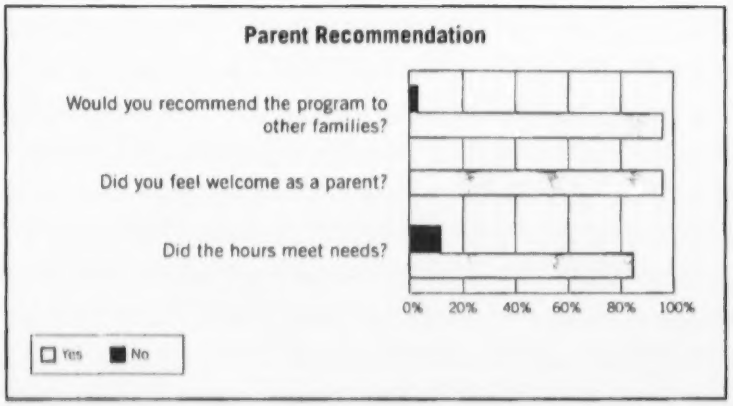
The great majority said they felt welcomed as a parent and that there was good communication and ample opportunities for them to participate in the program with their children. They felt the children were warmly welcomed, had ample activities to engage in and that the program prepared their children to enter public school.

The greatest reservation about the program that parents expressed was that the program day was too short. However, eighty-three percent said that the hours met their needs.

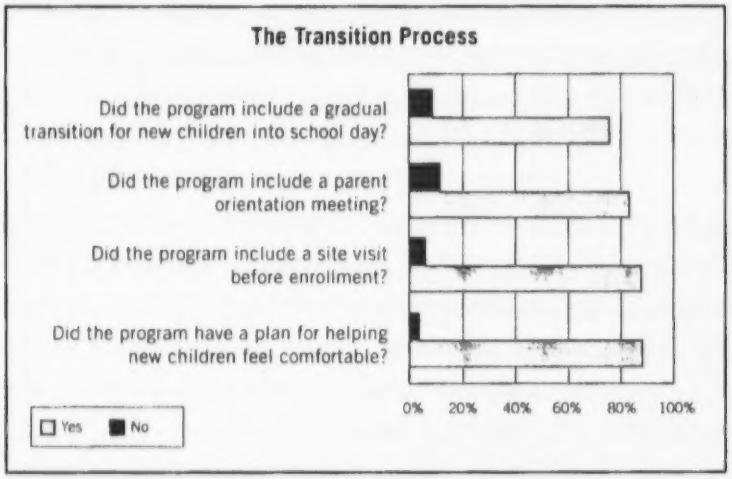
The following charts indicate important findings from the survey.



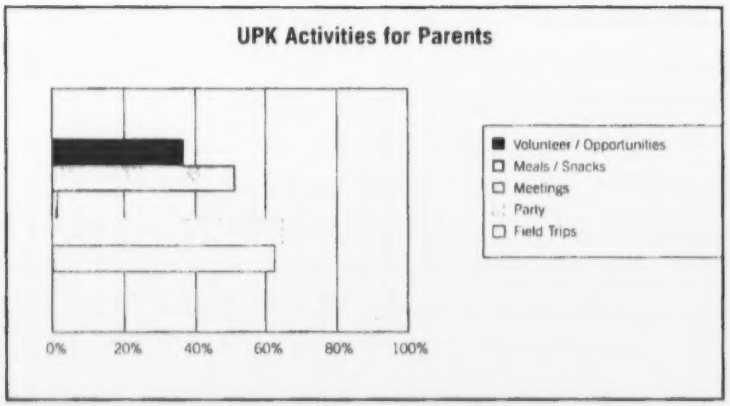
The great majority of parents in Community School District 11 found the enrollment process easy.



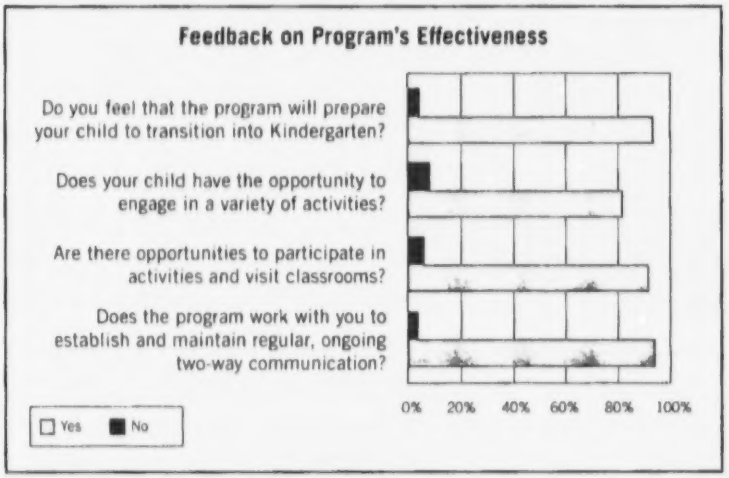
The great majority of parents felt welcomed in the program and said they would recommend it to others. A large majority felt the program hours met their needs. This included children who had more than the 2.5 hours of UPK program because often UPK was blended with other funded programs to offer a longer day to children.



Most parents felt that the program had a plan in place to help their children become acclimated to the preschool setting. Programs made the parents and the children feel welcomed and comfortable.



Parents said that the UPK programs offered ample opportunity for their involvement. While meetings were rare, most parents got involved through classroom parties, field trips, and by volunteering at mealtime or on projects.



Almost all parents surveyed believed that the UPK program prepared their children for Kindergarten. There were many opportunities for them to be with their children and many varied activities for the children to develop their learning skills. They also felt that the programs worked hard to maintain an ongoing communication with them.

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CHILD ACHIEVEMENT

The schools in District 11 keep a portfolio on each child that includes a Developmental Profile, as well as samples of the child's work and teacher comments, but these have not been compiled according to a specific method at the district level. Consequently, the quickest way to get a snapshot of the benefits of UPK was to ask kindergarten teachers in the district for their impressions regarding how children who attended UPK differ from children who did not. We received comments from 41 kindergarten teachers.

The teachers were asked "Are the children in your class who attended Universal PreK better prepared for kindergarten?" Of the 41 who responded, 36 gave an unqualified Yes. Four teachers responded that some children were better prepared and one teacher did not think the UPK children were better prepared. Thus, among Kindergarten teachers, 88% without qualification report that UPK children (those with an early education program) are better prepared than those who do not. All but one teacher agreed that PreK was a valuable program, indicating that UPK allowed the teacher to "get right into their curriculum."

We then asked the teachers to "Please indicate what (they) have observed about the children who have attended UPK that is different from those children who have not attended the program." In response to this query, all teachers indicated that all or most UPK children demonstrated advanced skills. The teachers mentioned better **academic skills** (learning is easier for them, they grasp number and letter concepts better, they connect easier with routines, they know sounds, letters, shapes and colors and are emergent readers, they know when and how to play, they know many games and they are familiar with story time), **motor skills** (better equipped with fine and gross motor skills, handwriting, cutting and gluing) and **social skills** (the children are self-motivated, better able to follow directions, are used to a structured environment, participate in a more harmonious way, are emotionally more mature, used to separation from parents, better prepared for a full day, adjust quicker, more independent, they know how to take turns and share, they come with the idea that they are in school to learn, they can work in groups, they understand how to help each other, they aren't withdrawn or reserved). The following chart indicates teacher observations about UPK children that are different from children who did not have an early education program.

Kindergarten Teachers Assessment of UPK Children's Perfomance

COGNITIVE SKILLS	SENSORY-MOTOR SKILLS	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS
19 teachers said UPK children identify letters and sounds, shapes, colors, numbers better	8 teachers said the children have better motor skills	11 teachers indicated the children were more mature socially
7 teachers said the children can write letters	2 teachers said the children have better listening skills	9 teachers said the children work cooperatively
5 teachers said the children have better verbal skills		7 teachers said the children follow directions easier
4 teachers said the children enjoy books		6 teachers said the children know the rules and routines
2 teachers said the children have number readiness		5 teachers said the children were more independent (self-motivated)
2 teachers said the children could read words		5 teachers said the children come ready to work
1 teacher said the children have better concepts		2 teachers said the children are familiar with classroom behavior
		1 teacher said the children don't cry as much
		1 teacher said the children have a more positive attitude

Although this ad hoc survey only skims the surface of the benefits of UPK for the 1,800 children in Community School District 11, it actually says quite a bit. It takes vague concepts like "school readiness" and "learning skills" and translates them into concrete accomplishments.

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Conclusion

The model used in District 11 allows diversity of approach. *"We allow many ways of doing things. We allow directors to think out of the box in enhancing their program, and to build uniqueness with the teachers and staff using all of their capabilities."*

CSD 11 believes that the model they put in place has allowed all stakeholders to "own" the vision and be fully invested in the program. In addition, the emphasis on collaborative leadership has provided a strong foundation for the next phase of work —developing an integrated early care and education system at the local level.

The community optimizes each opportunity to share information that in turn contributes to a better system and improved quality. CBOs have been instrumental in its design and have benefited greatly from this model. From what we can tell, everyone has benefited. The model allows for the maximum utilization of human and material resources, builds trust and enthusiasm among professionals, and allows for quality programs for children and families.

Lessons Learned

From this look at the leadership, business model and program model in CSD 11 it appears that if community school districts desire a working partnership with CBO they need:

- A clear vision of a collaborative model;
- Mutual respect for the professional commitment of CBOs and schools;
- A well functioning CSD management system that facilitates contracting, reporting and enrollment of children;
- An active advisory board invested in collaborative program models;
- Investment in the program and technical support to all partners;
- Strong working relationship with CBO program directors;
- A business model that recognizes finance and program needs;
- Attention to parent needs responses and preferences;
- Attention to professional development, particularly teacher certification and recruitment; and
- Consistent review of how the model is working with attention to ongoing adjustments.

APPENDIX A

Community School District 11 Parent Survey - 2001

Universal Pre-k Parent Questionnaire

School or Program Name: _____

1. Is your child enrolled in a: ☐ Half day program ☐ Full day program ☐ Extended day program
2. Do the hours meet your needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you feel welcome as a parent? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   Explain: _____
4. Would you recommend this program to other families? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Was the enrollment process: ☐ Easy ☐ Difficult
   If difficult, why? _____
6. Does the UPK program have a Parent Handbook? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Does the program have a plan for helping new children feel comfortable? ☐ Yes ☐ No

   Does the program include:

   a. Site visit before enrollment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   b. A Parent orientation meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   c. Gradual transition for new children into school day? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Does the program work with parents to establish and maintain regular, ongoing, two-way communication? ☐ Yes ☐ No

   Does the program include any of the following? (Please check):

   ☐ Parent Orientation Meeting ☐ Newsletters
   ☐ Parent/Teacher Conferences ☐ Curriculum Outline
   ☐ PTA or Parent Advisory Board ☐ Other _____
9. Are there opportunities for you to participate in activities and visit the classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   Do these activities include: ☐ Field Trips ☐ Parties ☐ Meals/Snacks ☐ Volunteer/Opportunities
   ☐ Other _____
10. Does the program provide the following services:

    a. Bilingual Resources ☐ Yes ☐ No
    b. Special Education Resources ☐ Yes ☐ No
    c. Social Worker ☐ Yes ☐ No
    d. Nurse/Health Clinic ☐ Yes ☐ No
    e. Parenting Workshops ☐ Yes ☐ No
    f. Information on Kindergarten transition ☐ Yes ☐ No
    g. Enrichment programs (i.e. music specialist, dance specialist, science, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Does your child have the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    Explain: _____

12. Do you feel that the program will prepare your child to transition into kindergarten? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How did you find out about this program? (Please check):

    ☐ Parent referral ☐ Word of Mouth ☐ Newspaper

    ☐ Local School ☐ Community Agency ☐ Other _____

14. What are your reasons for enrolling your child in a UPK program? (Please check):

    ☐ Educational enrichment ☐ Day care

    ☐ Socialization ☐ Other _____

15. Do you have any suggestions to improve the program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    Explain: _____

    _____

    _____

16. How often do you read to your child? (Please check):

    ☐ Five times a week? ☐ More than five times a week? ☐ Less than five times a week?

17. Are you involved in any other learning activities with your child outside of the UPK program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

APPENDIX B

Survey of CBO Directors in CSD 11 – 2001

1. What was the reason for participating in Universal Pre-kindergarten Initiative?
2. How did the partnership with District 11 make a difference in the service you provide?
3. What are three benefits that resulted from the collaboration with District 11?
4. What are some disadvantages or difficulties you experienced because of this collaboration?
5. How beneficial is the professional development provided by District 11?

   Explain?
6. Has your work with District 11 changed the philosophy of your Prekindergarten agency?
7. Has the collaboration helped create a vision for early care and education?
8. How has the collaboration helped your agency to hire quality staff?
9. Did your agency develop new criteria for hiring teachers and staff because of the collaboration?
10. What keeps teachers involved in UPK classrooms?
11. How did your collaboration with District 11 create new opportunities for your agency?
12. How did the partnership enable your agency to network with other community-based organization?
13. How does the current research in staff development enhance your own professionalism as Director?
14. Is there anything you would like to change in your working relationship with District 11?
15. Has expectations in your agency changed because of your partnership with District 11?
16. Has District 11 help create a vision for curriculum and early education for pre-schoolers?
17. How much input does District 11 have in developing curriculum at your agency?
18. What other services would you like the District to support?
19. How does your relationship with District 11, enable you and your staff to articulate on issues such as budgeting, etc.?
20. Do you like the current formula of a flat rate per child or do you prefer to compete for the money?
21. Do you think that the flat rate per child over time would offer stability to your agency? Explain focusing on organizational change?
22. How has District 11's educational philosophy revitalized your agency both organizational and programmatically?
23. Has the selection of your pre-school population changed with this collaboration?
24. What new decision-making processes are in place because of this collaboration?
25. Are you reaching out actively to families through advertising and parent involvement programs?
26. Has outside perception changed for your agency as far as early care and education?
27. What was the reason for participating in Universal Prekindergarten Initiative?
28. How did the partnership with District 11 make a difference in the service you provide?

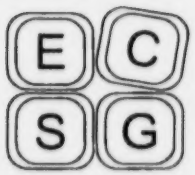
APPENDIX C

Survey of UPK Advisory Board Members in CSD 11 – 2001

1. How was the UPK Advisory Board formed?
2. Why do you participate as a member of the UPK Advisory Board?
3. What motivates you to continue attending UPK Advisory Board meetings?
4. How is your contribution as a member of the UPK Advisory Board recognized?
5. What was your vision when you initially became a member of the UPK Advisory Board?
6. What is your vision now as a member of the UPK Advisory Board?
7. What do you bring to each meeting as a member of the UPK Advisory Board?
8. What do you like about the UPK Advisory Board?
9. How does attending UPK Advisory Board meetings enhance your life and your work?
10. Would you recommend UPK education as practiced in District Eleven to your own family members? If so, why?

Early Childhood Programs Offering Universal Prekindergarten In Community School District 11

1. 1199 Future of America Learning Center
2. A.H.R.C. / Howard Haber Early Learning Center
3. Bronx House Nursery School (Site I; Site II)
4. Co-op City NAACP Day Care, Inc.
5. Crawford Community Day Care, Inc.
6. East Bronx Day Care / NAACP
7. Parkchester Early Learning Center (2 Sites)
8. Eastchester Nursery
9. Every Blessed Child Day Care Center
10. Goosebay Nursery School (4 sites)
11. Gun Hill Child Care
12. I.A.H.D. / Institute of Applied Human Dynamics
13. Lavelle School for the Blind
14. Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School
15. Little Stars School
16. Maggie Alston Day Care, Inc.
17. Morris Park L.D.C.
18. Mosholu Montefiore Co-op City Child Development Center
19. New Covenant Christian School
20. North Bronx N.C.N.W. Child Development Center
21. Rainbow School for Child Development
22. St. Dominic's Home, DBA John T. White Early Childhood Center
23. Susan E.Wagner Day Schools, DBA: North East Bronx (4 Sites)
24. The Little Brick House Day Care Center
25. United Cerebral Palsy of New York City, Inc. (Bronx Rehabilitation Campus)
26. Victory Day Care Center
27. Volunteers of America Early Learning Center
28. Williamsbridge N.A.A.C.P. Day Care Center



The Early Childhood Strategic Group

Advocates for Children
Agenda for Children Tomorrow
Bank Street College of Education
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens
Child Care Action Campaign
Child Care Council at CUNY
Child Care, Inc.
Children's Aid Society
Children's Defense Fund – New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Collaborative Ventures, Inc.
Day Care Council of New York, Inc.
Early Childhood Policy Research
Educational Frameworks Inc.
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Graham Windham Services for Children & Families
Herbert G. Birch Services
National Black Child Development Institute
New Visions for Public Schools
Susan Wagner Day Care Center
UJA Federation – New York
United Neighborhood Houses

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